

## **Kansas Department of Labor**

### *Podcast Episode 5: New benefit year and quarter change determination notices*

Hello there and welcome to *Questions from Claimants*, the podcast about all things unemployment. Each episode we'll speak with unemployment experts from the Kansas Department of Labor to help answer your questions about your benefits. I'm your host Jonathan Larence.

Today we're talking about two notices that are common to get from the Kansas Department of Labor when you've been receiving benefits for an extended period of time--the quarter change determination and new benefit year determination. To find out what these are and how they affect your benefits I spoke with Sheryl Linton, Technical Processes Manager at the Unemployment Insurance Contact Center.

**Jonathan:** Sheryl, thanks for joining us today.

**Sheryl:** Thank you for having me, Jonathan.

**Jonathan:** Now Sheryl, exactly what are new benefit year determinations?

**Sheryl:** New benefit year determinations are monetary determination notices and they inform you if you have sufficient wages to qualify for unemployment insurance benefit year. The benefit year is the one-year period in which you can claim unemployment benefits. Generally, beginning on a Sunday of the first week in which your claim is effective. The effective date of the claim is always located in the upper right hand corner of the determination notice. If your benefit year ends and you are still unemployed or under-employed and claiming weekly benefits we do have to see whether or not you qualify for a new unemployment claim. And that is required by law.

**Jonathan:** Ok, thank you. What are quarter change determinations?

**Sheryl:** Quarter change determinations are monetary determinations notices, just like a new benefit year determination notice. They are automatically generated by the system for our claimants and generally when this occurs it's because the claimant is drawing benefits from a special program. Those special programs are funded through state and federal programs such as Approved Training, Trade Adjustment Allowances, State Extended Benefits, Federal Emergency Unemployment Compensation and right now we do have all those programs in effect. Each time a quarter change takes place, our system will automatically generate an attempt to establish a new claim for benefits under state unemployment insurance benefits and it happens each quarter because the base period used to determine eligibility for those claims, changes with each quarter. There are four quarters in a year. It always happens on the first full week of the quarter and that would be January, April, July and October.

**Jonathan:** Sheryl, how will I be notified of these determinations?

**Sheryl:** Both determinations and new benefit year determination, quarter change determinations come to you in the mail and unfortunately they are identical so many claimants get confused because they may get one or two notices very close together.

**Jonathan:** So you're saying that if my new benefit year was up April 1, 2010, and I received that new benefit year determination in the mail and because that also falls on a quarter change, I could receive a quarter change determination and a new year benefit determination and they would be exactly the same or very similar all within a short amount of time?

**Sheryl:** That's very close. Basically, you'd get a monetary determination for the end of your benefit year in order to be able to determine whether or not you are entitled to a new benefit year. If you do not have sufficient wages to qualify for a new benefit year, the following week is the quarter change week because it runs Sunday through Saturday. We would also attempt to establish a new benefit year for you during that week. So, another notice would go out, a monetary determination notice would go out attempting to

establish your benefit year under our quarter change. Now, those two notices are going to look pretty much identical. What is going to be different is the quarter and the wages applied to both of those benefit years.

**Jonathan:** If I'm found to be eligible for a new claim what exactly will happen?

**Sheryl:** If you are determined to be eligible for a new claim for regular state benefits, then if you are drawing benefits under a special program such as Emergency Unemployment (EUC) or State Extended Benefits, TRA – Trade Adjustment Allowances – or Approved Training then the benefits under those programs would stop and you would begin receiving benefits from your new state unemployment benefit program.

**Jonathan:** So it sounds like actually if you're eligible for a new claim and you started a new claim it actually sounds like a good thing.

**Sheryl:** It could be a good thing. In many cases it allows our claimants to draw for a longer period of time because once they've exhausted benefits under their new claim many times they are able to go back and draw benefits under those special programs, provided that those special programs are still in effect.

**Jonathan:** So if I'm found to be not eligible for a new claim what will happen?

**Sheryl:** If it is determined you are not eligible for a new regular state unemployment benefit claim, you should be able to continue drawing benefits under your special program.

**Jonathan:** So just to reiterate, if I am found ineligible then I will just continue on the claim that I am currently on, correct?

**Sheryl:** If you are drawing benefits from a special program, federal or state, then it is possible that you could continue to draw benefits once your benefit year has ended as long as that program remains in effect.

**Jonathan:** So if I need to file a new claim due to one of these determinations, can I fill out the application online?

**Sheryl:** Actually it's not necessary for you to fill out an application at all. If you're drawing benefits from one of these special state or federal programs, because we are required by law to be able to check your entitlement to regular state unemployment, we do that automatically for them through our system. Otherwise they would actually have to file the application.

**Jonathan:** Will I receive a different benefit amount after these determinations?

**Sheryl:** It is quite possible that you may receive a different weekly or even total benefit amount after one of those determinations. The reason for that is because the quarters and the wages used to establish the claim are different than when your original new benefit year was set-up, and because of that if wages are not identical it could either lower or increase your weekly benefit amount, lower or increase the number of weeks that you're able to draw benefits.

**Jonathan:** Sheryl, thanks for joining us today.

**Sheryl:** Thank you for having me, Jonathan.

That's it for this episode of Questions from Claimants. Join us next time when we'll answer more of your questions about the emergency unemployment benefit programs.

If you have questions about Kansas unemployment process, e-mail us at [podcast@dol.ks.gov](mailto:podcast@dol.ks.gov). For security reasons we can't answer specific questions about your claim, but we may be able to answer

general questions in an upcoming episode. Also, remember to go online to [www.GetKansasBenefits.com](http://www.GetKansasBenefits.com) for more information.

I'm Jonathan Larance. Thanks for listening.